

REMARKS

Claims 1-34 are pending in this application. By this Amendment, claim 17 is amended. Support for the amendment to claim 17 can be found at least at paragraphs [0087]-[0089] and [0091-0099]. Thus, no new matter is added.

Applicant appreciates the courtesies shown to Applicant's representative by Examiner Lee in the October 7 personal interview. Applicant's separate record of the substance of the interview is incorporated into the following remarks.

I. Allowable Subject Matter

Applicant gratefully acknowledges the Office Action's indication that claims 1-16, 33 and 34 are allowed and claims 19-22, 25, 30 and 32 contain allowable subject matter.

II. Claims 17, 18, 23, 24, 26-29 and 31 Define Patentable Subject Matter

A. Claims 17, 18, 23 and 31

The Office Action rejects claims 17, 18, 23 and 31 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over U.S. Patent No. 5,282,127 to Mii in view of U.S. Patent No. 4,961,088 to Gilliland et al. This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Claims 17, 18, 23 and 31 would not have been rendered obvious by Mii in view of Gilliland. As agreed upon during the personal interview, none of the applied references teach or suggest "an image forming apparatus that includes at least one replacement part including a storage medium, wherein the storage medium only stores identification information inherent to the replacement part, ... a control unit that obtains information on an operating state of the image forming apparatus, wherein the operating state includes information stored in a storage medium, ... wherein the information includes usage state of the at least one replacement part," as recited in independent claim 17.

That is, the claimed at least one replacement part stores only the identification information inherent thereto, and does not need to store many types of information such as

type of replacement parts, the color identification of toner or the like, a model identification, and a life counter. The claimed storage medium in the apparatus main body, instead, stores the usage state of the replacement part along with the operating state of the image forming apparatus. Thus, a memory for the at least one replacement part having a large capacity becomes unnecessary. Further, by storing identification information inherent thereto in the at least one replacement part, the increase in cost or the number of man hours such as time for writing and reading data can be prevented. See e.g., paragraphs [0021], [0024] and [0089].

As acknowledged by the Office Action on page 3, Mii does not disclose at least one replacement part including a storage medium. However, Gilliland does not remedy this deficiency. As agreed upon during the personal interview, Gilliland does not teach or suggest the claimed at least one replacement part.

Instead, Gilliland discloses a cartridge that has an EEPROM 90 integral therewith. The EEPROM 90 of the cartridge stores or logs a count of the number of images remaining on each cartridge. See e.g., Gilliland, col. 6, lines 35–59. Because the cartridge of Gilliland stores or logs a count of the number of images, Gilliland does not disclose the claimed at least one replacement part and the claimed storage medium.

Thus, for at least the reasons, claim 17 is patentable over Mii and Gilliland. Further, claims 18, 23 and 31, which depend from claim 17, are also patentable for at least the reasons discussed with respect to claim 17, as well as the additional features recited therein.

Withdrawal of the rejection is thus respectfully requested.

B. Claim 24

The Office Action rejects claim 24 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over Mii in view of Gilliland and further in view of U.S. Publication No. 2003/0044184 to Yano et al. This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Yano does not remedy the deficiencies of Mii and Gilliland with respect to claim 17. Claim 24 depends from claim 17. Thus, claim 24 is patentable over Mii, Gilliland and Yano for at least the reasons discussed above with respect to claim 17, as well as the additional features recited therein. Withdrawal of the rejection is thus respectfully requested.

C. Claim 26

The Office Action rejects claim 26 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over Mii in view of Gilliland and further in view of U.S. Publication No. 2001/00554922 to Wood et al. This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Wood does not remedy the deficiencies of Mii and Gilliland with respect to claim 17. Claim 26 depends from claim 17. Thus, claim 26, is patentable over Mii, Gilliland and Wood for the reasons discussed with respect to claim 17, as well as the additional features recited therein. Withdrawal of the rejection is thus respectfully requested.

D. Claim 27

The Office Action rejects claim 27 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over Mii in view of Gilliland and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,798,995 to Nagata. This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Nagata does not remedy the deficiencies of Mii and Gilliland with respect to claim 17. Claim 27 depends from claim 17. Thus, claim 27 is patentable over Mii, Gilliland and Nagata for at least the reasons discussed with respect to claim 17, as well as the additional features recited therein. Withdrawal of the rejection is thus respectfully requested.

E. Claim 29

The Office Action rejects claim 29 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over Mii in view of Gilliland and further in view of U.S. Publication No. 2002/0051186 to Takahashi. This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Takahashi does not remedy the deficiencies of Mii and Gilliland with respect to claim 17. Claim 29 depends from claim 17. Thus, claim 29 is patentable over Mii, Gilliland and Takahashi for at least the reasons discussed with respect to claim 17, as well as the additional features recited therein. Withdrawal of the rejection is thus respectfully requested.

F. Claims 27 and 28

The Office Action rejects claims 27 and 28 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over Mii in view of Gilliland and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,317,848 to Sorens et al. This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Sorens does not remedy the deficiencies of Mii and Gilliland with respect to claim 17. Claims 27 and 28 depend from claim 17. Thus, claims 27 and 28 are patentable over Mii, Gilliland and Sorens for at least the reasons discussed with respect to claim 17, as well as the additional features recited therein. Withdrawal of the rejection is thus respectfully requested.

III. Conclusion

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that this application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and prompt allowance are earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner believe that anything further would be desirable in order to place this application in even better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number set forth below.

Respectfully submitted,



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